

A Referee Returns

By - Tommy Young

as told to David Skolnick

The last time I stepped into a wrestling ring, I had to be helped out. That was November 28, 1989, a day I will never forget for the rest of my life. Even though my days in the ring are over, wrestling will always have a special place in my heart.

I was somewhat surprised when I got a call from Gary Juster in February asking me if I would be interested in participating in *Slamboree*. I always had a lot of respect for Gary and it was his idea to see if I was interested. I told Gary I would be honored to be there. Anybody who knows me knows that I've blown my horn about how good I was. When it comes right down to it, to be honored as a legend is pretty heavy. At least it is to me. We set up the travel arrangements and they did everything I asked them to do. WCW was super. They were wonderful. They treated me very well. My good friend, Arn Anderson, said they'd put me in a hotel in downtown Philadelphia, but they put me at the Airport Marriott with everyone else.

When I got to the hotel lobby, I saw Tully Blanchard. Kevin Sullivan checked in and I said hello. I also ran into Gary Juster. I put my stuff in my room and went to the bar. At the bar, I ran into a lot of people I knew and others I had only heard about. Red Bastien, an old friend, was there. Terry Funk was there and going crazy. He was feeling his oats by then. He's just so much fun. I've got so much respect for him. There was one incident, however, I'll never forget. Terry was standing at the bar wearing only a t-shirt and a pair of jogging pants when Red walked up to the bar and yanked Terry's pants down all the way to his ankles; I mean exposing him completely. That's the fastest I ever saw Terry move. He bent over and covered up the front and kind of hopped around; just classical.

The next morning, we went to SlamMeet at the Philadelphia Civic Center. There were two groups of legends, the morning and afternoon. I was in the afternoon group with Angelo Mosca, Ray Stevens, Mr. Wrestling II, who was sitting next to me, and on my right was Ernie Ladd, who's bigger than ever. I was very impressed because the line was constant, wall-to-wall people. I met the legendary Verne Gagne. I only met him one time in the Seventies when he came to the Crockett area to testify in the IWA-Johnny Powers monopoly suit. It was a real honor meeting Hard Boiled Haggerty, Crusher and Don Curtis. I saw my old golfing buddy, Larry Zbyszko, who said he was playing scratch. Usually someone is a jerk as a rule at these things, but I have to tell the honest-to-God truth, of all these people, not one of them was a jerk.

I went to *Slamboree* a little hesitant since I've been out of wrestling so long. But they knew me in Philadelphia. I recognized a lot of the fans. When I was refereeing, I'd walk over to one section in Philly, which was the rowdiest, and I'd say, "Okay, folks. Ready, here we go. One and a two, Tommy sucks, Tommy sucks." They'd start chanting and I'd start dancing. After a while, they'd start laughing or get tired of doing it because I was having a ball. Philly can be a mean crowd. Most of your northern cities are meaner than the southern ones and Philly's as mean as they get. But they were always kind to me.

That night was SlamFeast at the Marriott's Independence Ballroom. The drinks cost and I tell you, I spent some money on drinks. I spent about half the money I was paid for the event on drinks, but it was worth it. I didn't care. I could have spent it all. I talked to Bobby

Heenan, a man I've always respected, and met Mean Gene Okerlund, a very nice guy. Gordon Solie, a dear old friend, was the master of ceremonies. He was bringing all the people up to the podium to be introduced. He started it by saying, "If I forget anybody, please let me know." They did it in alphabetical order and sure enough, he said every name except mine. I was the only one. I was sitting right in front of him and thinking, "Oh, no. What can I do? Get up in front of all these people and say, 'Hey, Gordon, you forgot me.'" I remember putting my head down and thinking, "Oh, no, I can't say anything." He started saying that he was concluding the ceremony when he said, "I did it. How can I forget an old friend? This man, we've known each other since 1982. I've seen a lot of guys and he's as good as anyone I've ever seen. He'd slide out of the ring." He went ape and then he introduced me. I found out later it was Mike Graham who poked him. Terry Funk told me later, "I was trying to get him not to notice you, but, damn it, he finally did." We then got together for a photo and I was saying to myself, "Wow, wow, what am I doing up here with these guys?"

At the banquet Saturday, Steve Austin came up to me and said, "Tommy, I watched you when I was a kid. I remember you and it's an honor to meet you." I thought, "Damn,

I like this kid." We talked for almost an hour. Steve Austin is super and a damn good performer. I really like Steve Austin. Of course, I got drunk again like everyone else.

Saturday night, I ran into Ric Flair who asked me if I wanted to make a comeback. Nearly five years ago, I suffered a serious neck injury in the ring. I told Ric that I'd love to get back in the ring, but it was too dangerous. Before I left for Philly, I put a neck collar on and gave myself a jolt. I nearly knocked myself silly. I thought, "Damn, brother, you're as brittle as ever. You can't do that." Ric asked if I would consider doing the legends match between Terry and Tully. He told me it was mine if I wanted it. One part kept telling me to get out there and do it and another part said, "For what? What's the point? You had a great career. It's over. Accept it." It's not easy, but I have.

Sunday, the day of Slamboree, I drove on the bus to the arena with Teddy Long. Teddy and I got off the bus and went right to where the food was. I ran into Cactus Jack there. He's the hardest working guy you'll ever see but that poor kid is going to be dead before he gets to 40. I saw my old buddies, the Nasty Boys. They had one of the wildest matches I've ever seen. Jerry

Sags got hit so hard, it was crazy. Nick Bockwinkel and I were watching it and I told him that I'd never seen anything like it before. It was unbelievable.

Before that match, we were brought out and introduced to the crowd. I was disappointed we didn't go to the ring. It was a bit anti-climatic. Several wrestlers were inducted into the Hall of Fame. So many people should have been there who weren't, such as Dory Funk Jr., Gene Kiniski and Swede Hansen, but overall the show was great.

After the card, it was back to the bar to get drunk again. Frank Anderson, the kid from Sweden, almost got into a fight with Brian Knobbs. Brian was feeling the beer and he was cutting down Sweden. Frank didn't understand Brian's dry sense of humor. Brian was ribbing, but the kid just didn't understand. I hate to see that.

Overall, the weekend was something I'll never forget. I saw some old friends and settled some old situations. It was just great. I can't say enough. They may ask me back and maybe I'd get into the Hall. I don't deserve that yet, if ever. The ones who are in there, I couldn't carry their jockstraps. I had so much fun. I'll always remember my weekend at *Slamboree*.

In Perspective: Missy Hyatt

This February, Melissa Hyatt, or as she has been known in wrestling circles for the past nine years, Missy Hyatt was released from World Championship Wrestling, perhaps permanently ending one of wrestling's most interesting careers as Hyatt is pursuing an acting career. Shortly after leaving WCW, Hyatt conducted an interview with Paul MacArthur that has shown her to be an engaging, intelligent individual. In the third part of this exclusive interview, Hyatt discusses her ideas about the business, some of her most interesting moments, Hulk Hogan, Madusa,

her parting with Road Warrior Hawk, and more.

Wrestling Perspective: When you were doing the bit with Dark Journey (in the UWF) she didn't know it was a work and was actually really laying them in...

Missy Hyatt: She beat my ass every night. She beat my ass in such a big way. I mean I cannot even watch old tapes because I cry. People look at that, the boys used to hide and watch. She did not know. I think she was doing drugs or something because

she would hear the people yell when she would get a hold of me and she would be yanking. I had the biggest bald spot. She broke my thumb, broke my nose, chipped my front teeth about four different times. I've had bonding. Well, I've had porcelain on my teeth now from her. She punched me in the mouth. I had bloody noses from her. I used to cover up my head and go, "Oh, my God, some one please come save me!" So John would be grabbing me to pull me out of the ring yelling at her, "Let

her go, Let her go! Come on, come on!" and she would be still pulling, yanking and tearing on me. I used to come back every night and I could never cry in front of the men because they'd think, "Ah, bitch shouldn't be in the business anyway. A woman shouldn't be in our business." So I would go out in the car or go out down the corridor or go out in the back and just cry. She beat my ass every time (laughs). I hate to say it, I laugh about it now, but that was probably one of the worst moments. I went over to her house and tried to explain to her, "Now, when you grab hair, you do this." I didn't know really what I was doing anyway. Sunshine knew what she was doing and Sunshine was great to work with. So was the Dirty White Girl. She was so easy, but she was scared too, because my husband was the booker at the time. She was easy to work with because she probably thought I was going to do something to her.

WP: *Friends in high places help.*

MH: When we moved there, Eddie (Gilbert) was the booker. About eight of the wrestlers were there to help us unload. When he got fired, we were getting ready to move to Atlanta, I had to hire some people. That's what I'm talking about. The way this business is, if you're hot, you're hot. It's the same thing in Hollywood. Me and Boni (Blackstone) as a matter of fact, Jason (Hervey) and I could pull up in any restaurant in anyplace and they'd park our car right out front and we'd be ushered right in. Well, Jason's out of town going to some stupid wedding, so Boni came to L.A. This is my perfect analogy of why I love New York and hate L.A. I would rather have bamboo shoots stuck up my fingernails and have a bag of rats stuck on my head and gnaw on my nose than live in L.A.

WP: *That's quite a metaphor.*

MH: It is. I'm telling you. Boni and I, we go out and we had this really great dinner. I started smoking when I lived in L.A. and listening to Garth Brooks. Two things I don't do now. I did it because country

music, you don't listen to it and you don't smoke in L.A. I used to pull up my Harley in front of Versaci on Rodeo Drive and back it in because my drag pipes would shake their glass and set their alarm off. It made them mad because everyone is so pretentious out there, me being Missy, who they don't know who I am. But, let's say the next day I got on a sitcom and I was the star of a sitcom and I backed up in front of Versaci and set off their alarm. Oh, they'd come out there, they'd give me a pedicure. They'd give me free stuff. Because I was just some blonde chick on a Harley setting off their alarm, they got testy. Well, don't get testy because I will do it every other day.

Anyway, Boni and I go out and she had this big wig on down to her butt. She had a wig on and people kept staring and I went to Boni, "Take that wig off." It was funny, but this is L.A. See in New York, you could wear the wig and nobody would look twice. So, we go outside because it's the end of the night and we had to wait an hour for the car. It was at the point where their taking pictures and doing all of that stuff. We're standing out there and Boni's got the wig on, she's leaning on a pole about six feet away from me because we're tired. We've been out shopping all day and drove all over town. By this time, her wig was a little unfluffed (laughs). People were walking by going, "Nice hair." It was the funniest thing. So I'm sitting there (laughs) and I'm waiting for the car and I hear this one girl and two guys and the one girl goes, "You grab and you hold her and I'll snatch it off." I go, "Excuse me." They look at me and I go, "If you do, I'll rip your head off." So they go, "Excuse me," and I go, "No, that's my best friend. She's down here visiting from Atlanta. She has cancer. She's been going through Chemotherapy for the last eight months. She has no hair and she only has six months to live." (laughs) They went, "Oh my God I'm so sorry." I go, "Why are people so rude? Why are people so fake? Why can't you just let her be herself? What does it matter that she's wearing that? Maybe it makes her feel good. What's your

problem?" All this stuff like that (laughs). I told Boni about it later and she was like, "Why didn't you tell me in the car, I'd of snatched it off in the Corvette, woo hoo. I'd run right by them."

But, when I was in New York looking for my apartment, two older ladies, now like older ladies have a thing about younger women. I know it because I see these skinny young girls and I go, "Bitch!" and that's honest. We're jealous. Women, and please quote me on this one: If women would stick together and there was no competition, no beauty queens, no Miss Georgia, if women would stick together, we would rule the world. We would and that's all I've got to say. But I had two older women, and it's like me, "Bitch!" They're skinny, they don't have no wrinkles. They've got nice clear skin. Oh, Demi Moore has beautiful skin. "Bitch!" (laughs) That's our normal way of thinking. But the two older women, one thought I was an actress and didn't want to tell her who I was. The one lady wanted her picture taken with me. I was in the bathroom. She goes, "Oh, you must be an actress." I'm like "Well, no, kind of." She goes, "Oh, well you will be. You'll be famous. Can I have my picture with you?" This other lady is like, "Oh, you're so pretty." I'm like, "Wow, thank you!" Because you never get that. They didn't go, "Oh, you're Missy Hyatt, you look better on TV." They were just normal (laughs).

WP: *What is your candid assessment of Paul E. Dangerously?*

MH: What do I think of Paul? I love Paul. I think we were separated at birth. I was adopted, I think I am probably his sister. I love him. He's a brat, but I love him. I mean that's really all I can say about him. I love him. Because what we had on TV, is that what people think?

WP: *I'm just curious because people seem to respect him for having a solid mind for the business?*

MH: A solid mind in the business? Is that what you've heard? Who the hell have you been talking to? Not me! No, I'm just

kidding. He's smart. He's not a kid anymore. He's Jim Cornette, the new generation. Nineties. Stop getting all these old people and their territories like, Greg Gagne (coughs). 'Sasha Girl did you say Greg Gagne? You are bad. Did you say...' Oops, she said Mike Graham. 'Boni, will you please muzzle my dog.' I'm sorry, it's my dog talking. I swear my dog, ask Mark Madden about my dog. He calls her lazy and worthless. But it's only because he had to carry her around at *Starrcade* for four hours. The dog carrying Mark Madden. I made him watch my dog. She doesn't do anything. She just lays. She'll lay anyway you put her. She's just kind of, like, worthless. She's got a workrate like Hogan (laughs). She won't sell, won't sell a bit and looks at you like you're stupid, like you're dumb all the time. Talks too much (laughs).

WP: Did you ever have any contact with Hulk at all?

MH: Hogan and Beefcake are the nicest people. Hogan, the night I got fired, him and Beefers called me at the hotel and they were asking me what was going on and I told them I got fired. They thought I was lying to them and I said, "No, I got fired Joe!" So Hogan gets on the phone with me and goes, "Well, do you want me to come down to the party and really get you heat. We'll all go to the party together." I was like, "Yo, look, y'all don't want the kind of heat I will give you if you go to the party with me." But Beefers came by and saw me and just said hey to me and stuff. Hogan is probably one of the nicest (people). Him and Jimmy Hart and Brutus are some of the nicest people in this whole world. It was so funny, because Hogan asked me a while back, "Missy, you want to come work for me?" I'm going, "Yeah, but you're going to have to pay me." He goes, "I'll pay you what you're worth." I looked at him and I looked at Beefers. I go, "If that was true, we'd all be out of a job." He just started laughing. Hogan is a cool dude. I like Hogan. There's not that many people in this business that I like. When I first met him, when I went to work for the

WWF, he came up to me and he goes, "So, you're here to take my job." Because I was going to bet the female Hulk Hogan. I go, "No, I'm sorry, but your chest is still bigger than mine." Those were the first words I ever said to Hogan. I never really talked to him, seen him or done anything. Just a couple of times in Florida. I saw him in L.A. when I was with Jason. I sent him over a couple of shots. He came and sat and the table and were out at a club and I thanked him. I thanked him for having a job. I thanked him, because if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have a job. If it wasn't for Hogan, none of us would have a job. If it wasn't for Gorgeous George, if it wasn't for Ric Flair, if it wasn't for those people. If it wasn't for Sunshine; if it wasn't for Jimmy Garvin, I probably wouldn't have a job.

WP: What's your impression of Jimmy Garvin?

MH: You know what, I really don't know him. I don't know him to give you an impression of him. The times I talked to him, very nice. And John Tatum, I still keep in touch with him. He's a very nice guy. I'm in touch with any guy that I've ever gone out with except Jason still hates my guts. I don't know why, I didn't do anything.

WP: What were your best and worst moments in the business?

MH: The worst and the best moment was probably tied to the same thing: main event, Texas Stadium in the mud match. Cool that I was main event. I still have the program. You know I've been in the business for eight and half years and I have seven tapes of any of the stuff that I've ever done. Most of the stuff is World Class and UWF. The rest of the stuff, I have nothing. I have nothing from Memphis, which was some of the funniest stuff. Doing that live TV was fun. I have nothing from WCW for five years. I have maybe a couple of *Main Events* on TV and that's it. I don't know how to use my VCR. Boni even gave me a VCR Plus. Jason has it and never gave it back. It wouldn't matter because I wouldn't

know how to do it any way. I still have that program. Every Monday the newspapers at Fort Worth used to write about the wrestling. I used to cut out the column. I used to send my parents every magazine I was in. The first year I was in the business in Dallas. But the Mud Match was probably the best because I was Main Event. But it was a double main event and the only reason why it had to be a main event - and you've got to put this in there - was because it was mud and they couldn't wrestle afterwards (laughs). But, see that doesn't matter because in actuality it still said 'Double Main Event' and I still got my name in the main event thing where it says Texas Stadium, whether it's mud or not. But, technically it probably wouldn't have been. Fritz paid me, I got the biggest pay off too. Not like now, the last five years I got paid contract whether I worked or whether I didn't. But actually, it said: Dallas/your payoff. That was probably one of my favorite moments and my most humiliating to have to wallow around in the mud. But I had such a good time it didn't matter. The mud thing was probably favorite and worst.

WP: What is your opinion of Madusa/Alundra Blazze?

MH: She's okay. I don't really know her. It was so funny because it was weird working with her. But then when she told me she was getting a divorce, I was like, "You want to go out and have dinner?" So I took her out to dinner and had drinks and talked. Like me, I don't really care when it comes to men and situations like that. The smartest thing to do if you want to like a guy is to go have lunch with his ex-wife or ex-girlfriend because they really know how they are. Because they can lie to you and everything, but the woman, what they're going to tell you, whether they're upset, they're feelings are hurt, or whatever the situation was, you can still kind of get an idea of the situation. That's why I say if women would stick together everything would be okay. So I kind of sympathized with her. We closed down a restaurant when we talked and we really didn't even

talk about Eddie. We just talked about other things. She's cool.

You know what I would have loved to have done? I came up with the idea and they wouldn't let us do it. I wanted to let her wrestle and I wanted to be her manager. You talk about hot. I'd come out there, "It takes a woman to do the job and I got me the woman right here, Madusa." I'd bring her out and go, "Mm, hm baby, you look so good. Get up there and whip that girl's tail." Oh, please, don't you think with two blondes people at home would be just loving it. People would love that in a big way. The insiders, knowing that we were both married to the same guy, wouldn't everyone have so much fun with that? We could look at each other and go, "We know each other very personally." I mean people would just go crazy. Like I said, sex and violence sells. I'd love to be her manager. I'd love to slink out there with her. Take off her robe. Take off her jacket or whatever. When she falls out at ringside, wipe her face and go, "Oh, baby, you're okay." Now you're laughing, would you like that?

WP: *It would sell, sure. I'm not going to lie to you and say I wouldn't want to see that.*

MH: Oh, no. You wouldn't want to see that! What is every man's fantasy and dream? The women would hate us because we would be heels. At my birthday party, I'm not going to say who they were, but there was a few of us girls all out on the dance floor. We were all loved up on each other, rubbing on each other, hugging and we were dancing. We were drunk, too. But we were loving just because we were friends. People like stepped back. Other women going, "Ooo, it's a disease. I'm going to catch it. Ooo gross, I'm going to get that." And the men are all standing around going, "Wow! Oh, my God! Wow!" I mean tell me that would not sell.

The other thing that I wanted to do, I wanted to get me a Black guy. A big old Black guy, like a Zeus, a Tony Atlas and I wanted to go off TV for a month and come back and go, "Missy Hyatt's been tracking traveling all around the world.

First I went to Canada. I went to Montreal and saw a hockey game. Then I went to Quebec City and it was beautiful. Then I went overseas and I went to China and got the most beautiful silk dresses made. Then I went up to Ireland and had the most beautiful crystals made to fit my taste. Then, the biggest find that I got was when I was down in Africa. I went out there and I went on this safari and I said, 'I got to find me a real man. I got to find me a man that was bred to be a winner. I got to find me a man that was bred to fight.' You know what I found me? I found me a Mandingo. So I threw all that silk, that crystal, that sterling silver and the diamonds that I got from South Africa away and I brought me back a Mandingo and here he is." I'd bring him out on leash, whip his butt to the ring. I'd go, "He's my million dollar man." I'd love all up on him and go, "Mm baby." He don't ever talk. I'd have him go, "Uh," "Shut up! Get in the ring." I'd call him Toby. No, I'd just call him Mandingo. He's my man. Then I'd get up there, if he'd get beat, when he jumps out of the ring, because he's hurt, I'd have me a crop, I'd want to wear the high riding boots and a safari hat and khaki pants - I'd hit his butt with the crop and go, "Get your butt back in there, come on, win me that belt." "Uh, huh." He'd never talk until he switches on me. When he switches on me and slaps me, oh, tell me after... but see the thing is Turner can't stand the heat of the NAACP and all those other people picketing. We'd be on *A Current Affair*. We'd be on *Oprah*, because I'd be sitting there with him and his little thong on *Oprah* going, "Oprah, don't you think you want this man?" *Oprah's* going, "Oh, I got me Stedman." I'd go, "Yeah, I've had Stedman. You haven't had a Mandingo." Oh, I can do me a big old thing on *Oprah*. We could have Letterman. I'd go, "Letterman, I got a man. This man was bred to fight and he was bred to do a lot of other things that you and no other man can never do." But the guy doesn't ever talk until one day he slaps me. The first words after he slaps, he goes, "Bitch." People would pop. He would be the biggest babyface there was.

Boni and I should run the company. We pay a lot more attention to detail. Men don't care. They're kind of like the three-minute thing. Women, we like the foreplay, the detail. We should be running the company. We're not going to do wrestling though.

WP: *What are you going to do instead?*

MH: We don't know yet. We're still figuring that out. Whatever we do though, we're going to be damn good. Midget Roller Derby. Hockey. God, I love hockey players. It's the only sport today where the men got tight big butts and no fat whatsoever and they're all ugly. True hockey players do not wear a face shield. I like a guy with his nose all over his face.

You know I'm so mad that Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan are getting all this publicity. They're getting too much publicity. I was on *Vicki* saying all *The Price is Right* girls are older than dirt and I haven't gotten any publicity. Just because they're older than dirt in a box. How come I didn't hear anything about that? Nancy gets called on by Troy Aikman. Why haven't I heard from Mark Messier?

WP: *Because no one watches Vicki.*

MH: Yes they do. Vicki's good. I like Vicki, she's my friend. Out of all the women in the morning, she's the only one who's campy. I never did watch her show because I thought she'd be horrible, but I started watching her show when I found out we were going to be on it. I saw her out there dancing around with balloons in front of her chest like they were her breasts and I said, "For a lady this age, she's cool." She's campy. She is funny and she's gonna laugh and she's going to do really good. Because all these other, oh, my God, that chick with the glasses, Sally Jesse all these other ones, they suck. Oprah, who if you go on her show and say, "Hi, I'm a lesbian and lost my leg and my girlfriend ran off with my second ex-husband and I have three children and one has Downs Syndrome."

WP: *You forgot the sex change.*

MH: Right, "And I had a sex change." Oprah will go, "You know, I know exactly how you feel." You're like, Oprah has had every problem that everyone has ever had. I'm like, okay.

WP: Were you ever forced to do something you didn't want to in the business?

MH: I didn't know about Abdullah throwing me in the water trough. I think it was funny now, but at the time I didn't know it was going to happen and so it scarred me because I thought I was going to get electrocuted. But then I got to meet a cute hockey player because he saw it. Because of that I didn't really mind it because it was like, "Ha, ha, I saw you get thrown in the water trough." It made Rush Limbaugh laugh, but that's not something that was planned.

Doing that stuff with Woman, I knew they were screwing with me and lying to me, having me go out with her and stuff. I mean I did it because I'm a company person, but I didn't want to do it because they were sitting there lying to me saying that they were going to turn her heel and have me in their corner and her a heel and work together. I knew they were getting ready to ix nay me. But that's not really doing anything either.

Oh, I got it, this is it! Ken Mantell wanted me to, when Dark Journey hit me with a purse, wanted my skirt to fly up over my head. I told him okay. I had underwear on. It's not like I was showing anything. But so I fall and it was TV and my skirt didn't fly up. He came back and he goes, "Well, I kind of wanted your skirt to fly up a little bit. I wanted it to fly up just a little bit, not show underwear because then we'd get in trouble, but, you know, just fly up." And I said, "Well, I'm sorry, I tried." So that's one.

Then on the Madusa thing, when she took off her coat before the bikini contest, they wanted me to take off my clothes and be standing there in a bra and have someone come and run up and put a blanket over me and I told them no, I wouldn't do that.

WP: What advice would you give to a woman who wants to enter the business?

MH: You can't get in unless you're married to a wrestler; and then it's very hard. I wouldn't know how to get in it. I would say don't even waste your time. I mean, if wrestling is what you want to do. I wouldn't want to be a lady wrestler, but now that I look back on it, if I would've learned how to wrestle when I was younger, I would've gone to Japan and I'd have been a millionaire right now. Because if Madusa can make it in Japan, with the way I look, oh, over in Japan. Them girls would beat my butt every night. I'd be over in Japan and they'd be making movies about my life. It would be Missy in Japan instead of Madonna. I'd be selling out the Tokyo Dome. Woo hoo, up on stage in pointed bras. I'm telling you because wrestling's big over there. I mean, I'm in all their magazines and I've never been over there. But I don't know how to wrestle. I don't want to wallow with the girls and things like that. I'd wallow with a guy like that, but I ain't locking with a girl. But if some girl wants to get in wrestling, I would just tell them you're chances are one in a million. No woman will ever be taken seriously. No woman will ever be able to give her input without getting in trouble for it. I dated Jake Roberts when he was a booker and they all looked at me and went, "Aw, honey, you're so cute. What you thinking?" I've gone in to different people that have been in charge to tell them my ideas and they look at you and go, "Aw honey, did you think of that yourself?" It's really hard. Unless all the men die (laughs).

WP: What a great proposition.

MH: If they all died, God, that would be great. We'd be a bunch of fat women, no makeup. God we'd all be happy. No Prosaic. We'd all be laying around drunk, all loved up on each other. That would be great. The world according to Missy. I had the worst crush and I had somebody hurt my feelings, so that's why I'm kind of like that on guys right now.

WP: That will do it.

MH: That will do it. Listen, I didn't even get anything on Valentine's Day. Judd Nelson did call me and wish me a happy Valentines Day. That's pretty cool. But the guy that I'm totally in love with, who I think is the perfect man for me, who I would bear his children. I would bear all five. I want a hockey team and they all have Hiatt on the back or Hegstrand. That's Hawk. I would bear all his children. I would never have even born Eddie Gilbert's children. I married him, but I never would have born his children. It's a totally different thing. I'm not going to get fat for just anyone. If I get fat and bear pups, it's Mike's children. But that's not going to happen.

WP: Even though you gave him a black rose (at Starrcade)?

MH: You caught that. You did. Not many people caught that. Oh, my God. Now you know after the match we came back because he broke up with me. You want to talk about breaking up before Valentine's Day, he broke up with me right before Christmas. Last year, Jason broke up with me before Christmas, which wasn't as bad because it's kind of like I'm so glad it's over with. But I was totally in love with Mike. He comes on the phone, he tells me, "You're just mad because you have to tell all your friends that I broke up with you." I dumped you was his thing. Right. So, anyway, my Christmas really blew. Then I came to Starrcade. I'm going to be skinny. I'm going to be tan. I'm going to walk out there and throw the rose down. Well, he didn't see it until afterwards and I said, "Didn't you see that I threw you the black flower?" He goes, "Yeah, I would have picked it up and ate it." I said, "Well you really look like a babyface." Because Sags got hurt and I had to run in and do the finish. I didn't know what to do. He's telling me to go in there and make the save. Mike just watched me run by and I'm thinking what a babyface you are because you just let me run by. He goes "Well, I should have grabbed you." I said, "Yeah, you should have grabbed me, it would've stopped the referee." But if he would've pulled me in the corner, knowing me, I would have jumped up, wrapped my legs around him, and kissed

him. They'd be pulling us apart and I'd be going, "No, no, get that double mint commercial!" We'd be sitting there, I'd be all latched up on to him. He'd be dragging me back to the ring and I'd have my arms latched up around him. He'd be going, "Woman get off me, get off me." I'd be all up on him, pulling on his leg, you know how a guy drags his leg with a child hanging on his leg as he's going. That would be me.

Then Sting, he wasn't even supposed to kiss me and he grabbed me and kissed me. Everyone has kissed me, but who I wanted, which was Mike. I bet they were probably back in the dressing room, "Ah, 50 bucks!" Oh, and then the slap. I had to pay my guys, "If you all let me slap Mike." Was

that the best slap in the world?

WP: *That was stiff.*

MH: Let me tell you what. I've never wanted to slap a man harder in my life than I did that day. Boy, he came back, he was going, "Whoa you're mad at me. You're mad at me." That was probably, I still get chills as a matter of fact. I'm getting goose bumps just thinking about that right now. I just wish he would've grabbed me. I would have loved to have kissed him on national TV.

WP: *The might of turned you.*

MH: Turned me babyface? No, not with me latching on to him. Because he'd have been

throwing me off and then I'd have been crawling back to him. I think people would have been going, "Ah ha, loser, loser." I'm going, Nasty Boys get away from me, I want Mike. Boni was going to make me little shoulder pads and I was going to wear little shoulder pads out there as mockery, but he dumped me, so I didn't get to wear them. I did the black rose instead.

Coming Soon • Missy Hyatt has agreed to discuss with Wrestling Perspective her much publicized lawsuit against WCW. This addendum to our original interview will appear in either Issue 45 or 46, depending on when she receives clearance to discuss the parties involved in the lawsuit.

Potshots From Around The World - By Bill "Potshot" Kunkel

The AAA Alternative

Caveat: If you are a diehard fan of Lucha-style wrestling, immediately move on to the next article. Just a friendly warning to Steve Sims, Ric Carter, Mike Tenay, and my fellow mat mavens that, should they continue reading, the Cheese-Off potential will increase dramatically.

The last time Las Vegas saw a live wrestling event, it was two *WrestleManias* ago. Prior to that *Wrestlemania IX*, Titan hadn't been to town in over a year. As a matter of fact, I was at that last house show and it was among the most memorable sporting events I have ever attended in person. Not because of the matches, of course. They sucked. I mean, they really sucked. No, I remember that night because it followed the day during which Los Angeles exploded into ghetto-driven rage over the Rodney King incident. As it so happened, the violence soon leaked into neighboring states, with riots breaking out even here in seemingly super-secure Las Vegas.

I was dozing in a front row seat, positioned

between my girlfriend, Laurie, and Ric "Hotline" Carter, with whom I was then hosting the local radio show, *WrestleTalk*. The evening had been predictably stultifying. Everybody worked as if they couldn't wait to get to the crap tables — a longing that was soon shared by the audience.

Suddenly, just prior to the main event - and the primary reason for my attendance - the Fink stepped up to the microphone and made a "public service" announcement. The gist of the announcement was as follows: Las Vegas is in flames. Virtually every major street and cross-street has been shut down by Metro (the Clark County Police Department, as opposed to the Sheriff's office). Now please remain quietly in your seats while Ric Flair fights Randy Savage.

To say that this was a poor idea is to minimize events beyond all comprehension. Obviously, both the Thomas & Mack Center and Titan staff

were anxious to keep the patrons informed, but as it turned out, virtually all the information they communicated was incorrect. No streets had been closed, "rioting" had been limited to a single shopping center, and as Laurie and I drove home, the streets seemed, if anything, unnaturally calm.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. In the wake of this chilling announcement, Flair and Savage came out and ran through the most perfunctory, let's-put-this-puppy-to-sleep-and-book performance I've witnessed in over 30 glorious years as a wrestling fan.

So the WWF was gone for a long time, and I had no interest in attending *Wrestlemania IX*. The only other live wrestling since then has been Moolah's old lady ego-fest and something called WAW, which used a bunch of anonymous English kids as faces and a corps of competent U.S. jobbers (Louie Spicolli, Bill Anderson, etc.) as heels which held a "TV Taping" at the

Aladdin. So far as I know, it has never been broadcast anywhere in the world.

After a long, long time, you begin to long for a little in-person action. So, when Hotline Carter called me up a few weeks ago, his voice half an octave higher with excitement, I listened eagerly. "The Triple-A was coming to town," he crowed! Mexican wrestlers! Loo-chuh! Beautiful masks at very reasonable prices! Topes! Tek-nudos and Wreck-neekos! Woooooooooooo!

I used to watch Lucha when I lived in New York, on Galavision. It bored me stiff. The rules were incomprehensible, everybody wore masks, and the matches were a collection of death-defying tumbling routines. Plus, I don't speak any more Espanol than three years of high school Spanish could leak into my brain.

Still, I reasoned, that was over five years ago. In that time, Dave Meltzer has yelled at the sheets for not giving Lucha enough ink. Then there was Jeff Mullins, ranting and raving about how excited he'd be to turn on WCW and see Mexican-style wrestling (I'll top that, Jazzy Jeff: I'd like to turn on WCW and see any-style wrestling!). Finally, there were locals like Hotline and Tenay, endlessly braying about the incredible heat, the flying diapers, etc. etc. etc. that supposedly make Lucha the coolest show around.

So I went.

Did I love it? Was I turned around?

No.

I thought it was awful. I left during the main event, bored into near-paralysis.

It was just as I remembered it. A bunch of acrobatic routines that communicated as much sense of hand-to-hand combat as synchronized swimming. Did I believe the rudos hated the technicos? Sure! But then I'd also believe it if the ringmaster told me

the Flying Barzelli Brothers were bitter enemies.

I'm a mark!

Those colorful masks! Wow. Nothing better than a bunch of anonymous wrestlers in Joker costumes and Predator suits, mindlessly ripping off legitimate license-holders the world over. Yet, you know something? Remember the nadir of the WWF, when no one had a "human" name anymore - when everyone was "Tugboat" or "Earthquake" or "Ax" or "Smash?" It had no impact, because everybody had a goofy name. Well, it's the same thing with these masked characters - to Anglos, or non-hardcores, it's a bunch of milling costumers who occasionally perform stunt-oriented acrobatics.

Speaking of being an outsider, despite the fact that the show was held in the United States, guys waving American flags were automatically booed and although the P.A. announcer could speak English - one or two announcements were made bilingually, before the show - no English was spoken during the show, and no attempt was made to familiarize the non-Mexicans with the rules of the game.

Believe me, there were a lot of things I needed cleared up. Forget the fact that I never have figured out what you do to win a match in this weirdo variant on pro graps, I rarely knew what the context to these matches was supposed to be. At one point, they had a normal-sized masked guy and either the biggest midget or the smallest Mexican I've ever seen up against a pair of masked, micro-size midgets - who went over! I was so dumbfounded I walked over to Tenay and asked him what was going on.

"A full size, a mini, and two micros!" he told me, shrugging as if to say: 'Don't ask me, I'm just pretending I know what's going on anyway.'

The main event featured such star performers as a bald-headed Jake Roberts

(he'd dropped his feathers in a hair match in Tijuana the night before for a reported \$20,000), Art "Beetlejuice" Barr (as Love Machine, a hugely over heel who dresses in red, white, and blue and waves the American flag), Rey Mysterio, Pero Aguayo, et al. Unfortunately, everybody remained in the ring, which meant there was no room for tumbling. That left milling about aimlessly. The referees (a rudo ref and a tecnico ref) may have been networking, but they certainly weren't refereeing anything.

Okay, so it wasn't to my taste. Does that mean other Americans won't like it?

I suspect so.

I constantly read about how successful AAA is, but where are they having this success? In towns with huge Mexican populations, that's where. Los Angeles may be part of the United States, but it also has a larger Mexican population than most cities in Mexico. The first time the AAA can draw more than flies to a show farther away than one day's drive from the Mexican border, I'll consider it a potentially viable form of wrestling for Americans.

As it is now, there are some jaded hardcores, so sick and disgusted with the rotten U.S. product that they're ready to embrace anything. I, myself, have found the Ultimate Fighting Championships and Shoot Wrestling shows quite entertaining. But Lucha? Forget it, guys, they will never sell this stuff in Peoria. They couldn't even sell it in New York, where there is also a large Hispanic population, because those Hispanics are mostly Puerto Ricans, who grew up watching Carlos the Clone and his American-style antics. They would understand what the rudos yell at the audience, but they still wouldn't "get" the product.

It's funny, but when U.S. promotions do this stuff, they get murdered. If a joker in a Predator costume walked out in Memphis, or a guy in, oh, I dunno, a clown suit, say,

walked out in the WWF, the hardcores would snicker. But when the same costumed clowns wear masks and do obviously dangerous, though clearly choreographed stunts, those same hardcores go wild. Why?

These Lucha matches don't "tell a story" - they are simply accumulated high spots, none of which were set up or supported through mat work on the show I saw - and it was mostly the same crew that had worked TripleMania the night before in Mexico, which means the cream

of the crop.

Lucha is all very well for Mexicans, but as an American, I'd just as soon not see my flag jeered and spit at unless it's for solid political reasons. I also don't care to listen to endless Spanish at a show being staged in an American city, and watch masked tumblers pretending to beat one another up. I was also increasingly uncomfortable in an audience that drank heavily throughout the show and became so rowdy by the main event that they hurled huge cups full

of soda at the ring (I left before the diapers came off, thank you).

I was an outsider. I will always be an outsider to this kind of wrestling. It's neither better nor worse than any other kind of wrestling. But anyone who thinks this stuff will turn on more than the tiniest fraction of the U.S. wrestling audience has spent too much time reading the sheets and not enough smelling the coffee.

Hasta la vista, bay-bees.

The Phantom Of The Ring

Beeg Jeem

Of all the overrated and crooked wrestlers I've written about over the years, none can compare in either category with Jim Londos. As a grappler, Londos couldn't wrestle his way out of a baby's embrace. As a crook, however, the "Golden Greek" was without peer; and that says a lot when you consider his peers. One such peer, Toots Mondt, once remarked of Londos, "Jim is so crooked, they'll have to screw him into the ground when he dies." There is nothing like the honest admiration of your fellow wrestlers.

Londos entered life as Christopher Theophalus, born January 2, 1897, in the little village of Argos, Greece. According to Londos, his mother supposedly wanted him to become a priest (God save the Church) while his father wanted him to become a soldier (God save his country). According to other accounts, however, the family was stern and poor. This may account for Londos' first career choice in 1913, when he ran away from home and worked his passage to America. Londos settled in Seattle, Washington, where he held a variety of low-paying jobs, often gambling his money away in back alley crap games. One patron of these games felt so sorry for the

young Theophalus that he arranged a slightly better paying job for him with the local carnival in nearby Happner, Oregon.

In the carnival, young Christopher had finally found his niche. He became an enthusiastic worker, erecting and removing tents, selling tickets, and working anywhere he was needed. He proved so adept at his new job that he was taught how to fleece the suckers at the games. One of the games he learned was wrestling; he had a natural athletic physique (which even enabled him to become something of a trapeze artist with the show), and had such an interest in wrestling that he took a few courses on the sport at the local YMCA to learn the basics of what was to become his life's career.

His success at his new profession was such that he soon turned professional. But though the boy left the carnival, the carnival never left the boy. In a skit developed in his carn days, Londos, known in those days as the "wrestling plasterer," would tour the countryside with a troupe that included Ray Steele and William Barton, among others. While Steele and another stooge were mixing it up in the ring, Londos would sit at ringside in an outfit bedecked

with plaster. At the proper moment, he would climb into the ring and issue a challenge which was usually backed with the money of a local sucker. It was the old carnival come-on, where the victim backs the challenger with lots of money in side-bets, and many an unwary sucker (in Londos' case, usually Greek, following his own ethnic bias) saw his life savings disappear backing the "plasterer" against Steele or another stooge.

This scheme managed to wear itself thin around the end of the First World War, when it became obvious that it was just as easy to fake a living in regular wrestling matches. But a new stage name was in order, so Chris Theophalus became Chris Londos, and eventually Jim Londos. He explained that the name was based on his favorite novelist, Jack London. In reality, the name change was to enable Londos to wrestle in major arenas undetected by the local law he was eluding. Even when Londos was put over as world's champion, he could not defend his belt in 11 states because of outstanding warrants.

Not even Londos' fellow grapplers were safe from his con artistry. Often, when

Londos would work as the booker for a local promoter, he would deliberately underestimate the night's take, so as to make his share bigger and their shares smaller. This creative accounting would later earn him the nickname, "Trimmer Jim," from fellow matman Joe Marsh. The name would stick with Londos the rest of his life.

Entering the world of "legitimate" professional wrestling around 1920, Londos ground out a steady living for the next eight years, slowly developing not into a great wrestler, but into a matinee idol, which is what promoters look for in a wrestler. The wrestling baloney can always be added later by press agents.

Londos' exploits as a drawing card came to the notice of Billy Sandow, Mondt and Strangler Lewis (aka the Trust) through the good offices of Jack Pfeffer. Pfeffer noticed that Londos drew a cross-sectional audience rather than a purely ethnic one and made the mistake of telling Sandow, who, with his partners, stole Londos from under Pfeffer's big nose and put him over as world's champ.

Londos proved to be a bonanza far beyond what the Trust could imagine. His only problem was that he was spectacular as a drawing card on both coasts, but in America's heartland, he had problems drawing flies. Of course, there were many states where he could not wrestle, but that was beside the point.

Night after night, Londos wowed 'em in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington, New Jersey and California with his golden looks and high-flying wrestling style. He was the first champion to begin wrestling freak attractions. Freaks such as Ferenc Holuban, Serge Kalmikoff, Tor Johnson and Ivan Podubny were the direct ancestors of such later East Coast freaks as Gorilla Monsoon, Baron Von Raschke, King Kong Bundy, and Papa

Shango. Londos also worked against normal wrestlers such as Gino Garibaldi, Rudy Dusek, Sammy Stein and old partner Ray Steele, never losing a bout. Londos was also the first champion to begin booking two bouts a day. He would wrestle an afternoon card in New York, then catch the train to wrestle an evening bout in Philadelphia.

The wrestling world had never seen a champion as popular as Londos. He was the first wrestler to successfully endorse products; he appeared on radio shows; he was mentioned in a Will Rogers monologue; and he even "starred" in a series of pornographic comics. Known as "Tijuana Bibles," these X-rated comics featured famous people in various sex acts. Londos had a running series entitled "Beeg Jeem," in which he always went to the aid of a damsel in distress and always ended up having sex with her. To the best of my knowledge, he was the only grunt 'n groaner to be featured in these hallmarks of literature.

Londos' popularity began to wane around 1932. Fans became tired of watching him win night after night and gates dropped accordingly. The Trust decided it was time to pass the belt on, with the recipient being Dick Shikat. Londos refused and left the promotion to go his own way. Still, he was champ and he had not been defeated. Mondt got a measure of revenge when he persuaded Joe Savoldi to hook Londos in Chicago, then had Savoldi drop the title to Lewis, who dropped it to Ed Don George and so on. Londos, however, had the last laugh by dropping his belt to Danno O'Mahoney for \$100,000 and gave O'Mahoney much needed credibility, since Londos was always the champ in the public's mind.

The loss didn't bother Londos in the least. He simply purchased a new championship belt and advertised himself as the real champion. He would go on defending this

"championship" as long as the crowds paid to see him. After the war, he took his now stale act to Greece, where he peddled it to a whole new crowd and made a small fortune as "world champion." But even this golden goose laid its last egg and "Jeemy" returned to the states, where he was lured out of retirement in 1950 to meet Primo Carnera in Chicago. The amazing thing about the bout was not Londos coming out of retirement, but the size of the crowd that paid to see him. "Beeg Jeem" may have been gone, but he was not forgotten. This, and subsequent bouts he worked, put him back in the public eye, and he became to be viewed as a "real" wrestler, in contrast to the phonies of the day (!).

Londos would retire for good a few years later. Though he would return from time to time as a referee or an "official" of whatever wrestling federation was paying him, he never bought into a major promotion. Although few may have thought that Londos would be able to spend his retirement outside prison, his last years were relatively calm. When he died on August 20, 1970, fan reaction ranged from surprise that he had lived so long to utter lack of knowledge about who he was. Who in the Thirties would have ever thought that Jim Londos could be forgotten?

The irony in all this was that Londos was largely responsible for shaping wrestling in the form that we now know it. Before his arrival on the scene, wrestling was a sweaty, boring slow dance best recommended for insomniacs. Londos sped up the game through the use of acrobatics and a sense of what the audience wanted. He was also the first "matinee idol" of the sport, drawing in large numbers of women customers for the first time. He was also the first wrestler to take advantage of "ring rats," or wrestling groupies. Londos rarely had a lonely night and had the paternity suits to prove it. In a very real sense, "Beeg Jeem" will always be with us in the wrestling arena, whether we acknowledge his presence or not. After all, he paved the way.

Phantom Phootnotes

Yokozuna? Yoko Oh-No!

In response to the request of Steve Yohe that I list my choices for a "Yokozuna" of pro wrestling, my initial inclination was to decline. The most difficult thing about such a tournament is deciding the criteria. Some wrestlers are great workers, but lack color; some are great showmen, but couldn't wrestle a lick; some are merely great grapplers; and some are great martial artists. So, overwhelmed by these categories, my reaction was to not do a tournament. However, Paul and Dave twisted my arm by threatening to tie me up and force me to watch the collected matches of Erik Watts. So, I quickly relented. Here are my choices for the "Yokozuna" tournament. I have seen each one of these wrestlers and have decided to base my tournament on wrestling and athletic ability. The hell with color and style. Thus, great showmen like Buddy Rogers do not qualify, since they can't really wrestle; and great acrobats like Tiger Mask do not qualify since they can't really wrestle; and Erik Watts does not qualify

since he doesn't fit any category. Here, then, are my selections (seedings in parentheses):

(1) Lou Thesz - The greatest professional wrestler I've ever seen.

(2) Dick Hutton - The greatest pure wrestler I've seen.

(3) Danny Hodge - Great quickness, enormous tensile strength, the best wrestler ever at his weight.

(4) Karl Gotch - The greatest wrestler to come from Europe, though overrated by smart fans who never saw him in his prime.

(5) Jack Brisco - Talented NCAA 191 lb. champion who became one of the greatest champs in NWA history.

(6) Yoshiaki Yatsu - Very underrated as a pure wrestler, though I believe he was the

greatest to ever come from Japan.

(7) Verne Gagne - One hell of an athlete and wrestler until he slowed down in the Sixties.

(8) Don Leo Jonathan - The best big man in wrestling history. Bruiser Brody couldn't carry Jonathan's shoes.

Round One: Thesz pins Jonathan; Hutton outpoints Gagne; Hodge pins Yatsu; Gotch outpoints Brisco.

Round Two: Hutton pins Hodge; Thesz pins Gotch.

Round Three: Thesz outpoints Hutton in double overtime to win tournament.

That's that. End of discussion, though I will later be releasing lists of the greatest wrestlers of all-time by category. More work for an incredibly lazy Phantom.

Sidelines

Thanks To Wade Keller, Jeff Mullins, and Georgiann Makropoulos for the plugs. Special thanks to Tommy Young for the wonderful article on *Slamboree*.

If You Enjoyed The Article By Tommy Young then you are sure to enjoy his full-length interview with *Wrestling Perspective* from 1991. This entertaining interview is still available in the 60 page book, *Wrestling Perspective • The Interviews Volume 1*. *Wrestling Perspective • The Interviews* also features interviews with Stan Lane, Billy Graham, Rockin' Robin, Ivan Koloff, Larry Sharpe, Special Delivery Jones and Hacksaw

Jim Duggan. If you missed any of these entertaining interviews with this eclectic group of wrestling personalities, then send \$10 for your copy of *Wrestling Perspective • The Interviews* today!

Coming Up In Wrestling Perspective • We have numerous plans for the next few months that should please even the most discriminating reader. Interviews with Smoky Mountain Wrestling General Manager Sandy Scott and Author, Painter and Former Pro Wrestler Ted Lewin have been conducted and are ready for publication. However, it doesn't stop there, as we are

hard at work securing interviews with pro wrestling legends and the people who shape the business as we know it today. Plus, let's not forget the wonderful work of our columnists. Only in *Wrestling Perspective* will you find the exceptional works of Bill "Potshot" Kunkel, Mike McGowen, and wrestling's foremost historian, The Phantom of the Ring. Of course, you'll find the analysis and commentary you've come to expect from Paul MacArthur and David Skolnick as well. 1994 is shaping up to be one of *Wrestling Perspective's* best years, so don't miss out, if you're subscription expires with this issue, renew today!

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